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INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 001340

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NEA/MAG (HOPKINS/HARRIS) AND DRL (JOHNSTONE)  
LONDON AND PARIS FOR NEA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/30/2017  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [TS](#)  
SUBJECT: COURT ORDERS OPPOSITION PARTY EVICTED FROM  
HEADQUARTERS

REF: A. TUNIS 1294

[1](#)B. TUNIS 1329

Classified By: Ambassador Robert F. Godec for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) On October 1, a Tunisian court handed down a decision evicting the opposition Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) from its party headquarters. The PDP's landlord began eviction proceedings in April (Ref A), saying the lease agreement had been violated. The eviction proceedings prompted a PDP hunger strike which began on September 20 (Ref B), as the PDP believes this eviction, like several other evictions faced by its regional offices, is politically motivated.

[1](#)2. (C) The two hunger strikers gave their reaction to the ruling in a press conference on October 2. PDP Secretary General Maya Jribi told PolOff that the German, Norwegian, EU and French Embassies sent representatives, in addition to those from other political parties (both recognized and unrecognized) and journalists. Jribi characterized her remarks as focusing on the objective of the strike, which she stated was to mobilize society into advocating for increased space to participate in the public sphere. She also noted that she thanked the various groups that have sent delegations to visit the hunger strikers, specifically the American Ambassador. Jribi mentioned that the PDP will not challenge the court's decision (because they feel that it is politically motivated). She said, however, that the PDP has twenty days to appeal the court's ruling from the time they receive the court decision in writing, and that they plan to stay in the building until that time.

[1](#)3. (C) PDP Politburo member Rachid Khachana on October 1 told Pol/EconCouns that the medical condition of the two hunger strikers had stabilized after a "more difficult" day on September 30. Meanwhile, according to al-Jazeera, Jribi has developed "health symptoms that could have dangerous ramifications." Al-Jazeera interviewed Fathi Touzeri, a physician who is monitoring the hunger strikers. Touzeri reported that Jribi's condition was "a source of great concern" and that she was "deteriorating at a fast pace." Chebbi has a history of heart disease, and Touzeri also noted that the hunger strike might exacerbate his condition.

[1](#)4. (C) PolOff and visiting DRL/NESCA Deputy Director Kari Johnstone plan to visit the hunger strikers on October 3.  
GODEC